

Looking Back to Move Forward

A Homiletic Guide to Spiritual Resilience and Historical Reverence

Based on the teachings of Dr. Delvin Atchison
on the Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32)

“Any people without a history have
a very dim view of their future.”





The Integrity of the Name

The Narrative:

When a mechanic blew out the air shocks on the narrator's car and refused to fix it without payment, righteous indignation took over. "I'm not going to pay him," the son insisted.

The Intervention:

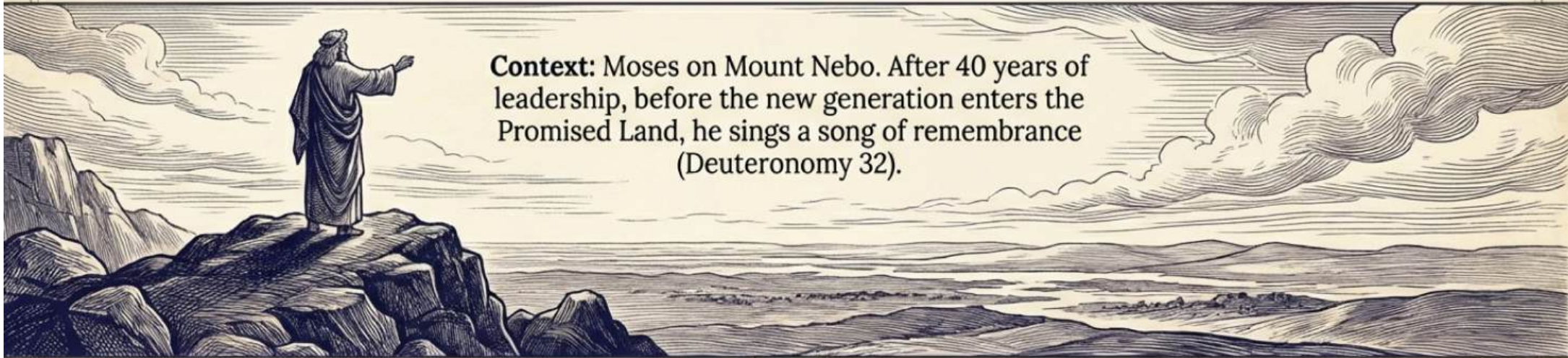
The father arrived, not to save money, but to save honor. He paid the mechanic himself.

The Lesson:

"I didn't ask you to pay him... I'm not going to let you mess up my name to prove a point." The father had held his name for a lifetime before gifting it to the son. Sometimes, you must look back at the source of your name to understand how to move forward with integrity.



Before the Dream Comes the Drama



Context: Moses on Mount Nebo. After 40 years of leadership, before the new generation enters the Promised Land, he sings a song of remembrance (Deuteronomy 32).

The Mosaic Blueprint:

“Remember the days of old. Consider the years of many generations.”

You cannot achieve the dream if you do not appreciate the drama that preceded it.

The Challenge:

This message frames the struggle of transition. It links the biblical transition of leadership to the modern reflection on the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.—moving from the struggle to the promise requires memory.



Phase I: Collective Recollection

Information is Cheap, Wisdom is Rare

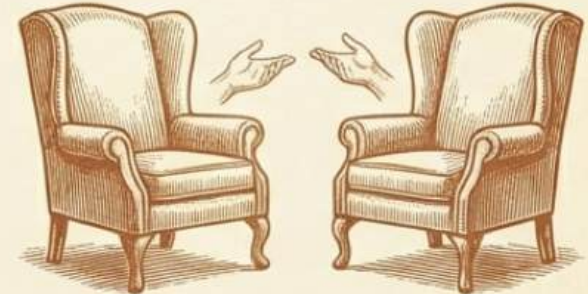
Present Intelligence



- Google & ChatGPT
- Instant Downloads
- Access to Data

You cannot download
a heritage.

Ancestral Wisdom



- Discussion & Storytelling
- Lived Experience
- Possession of Heritage

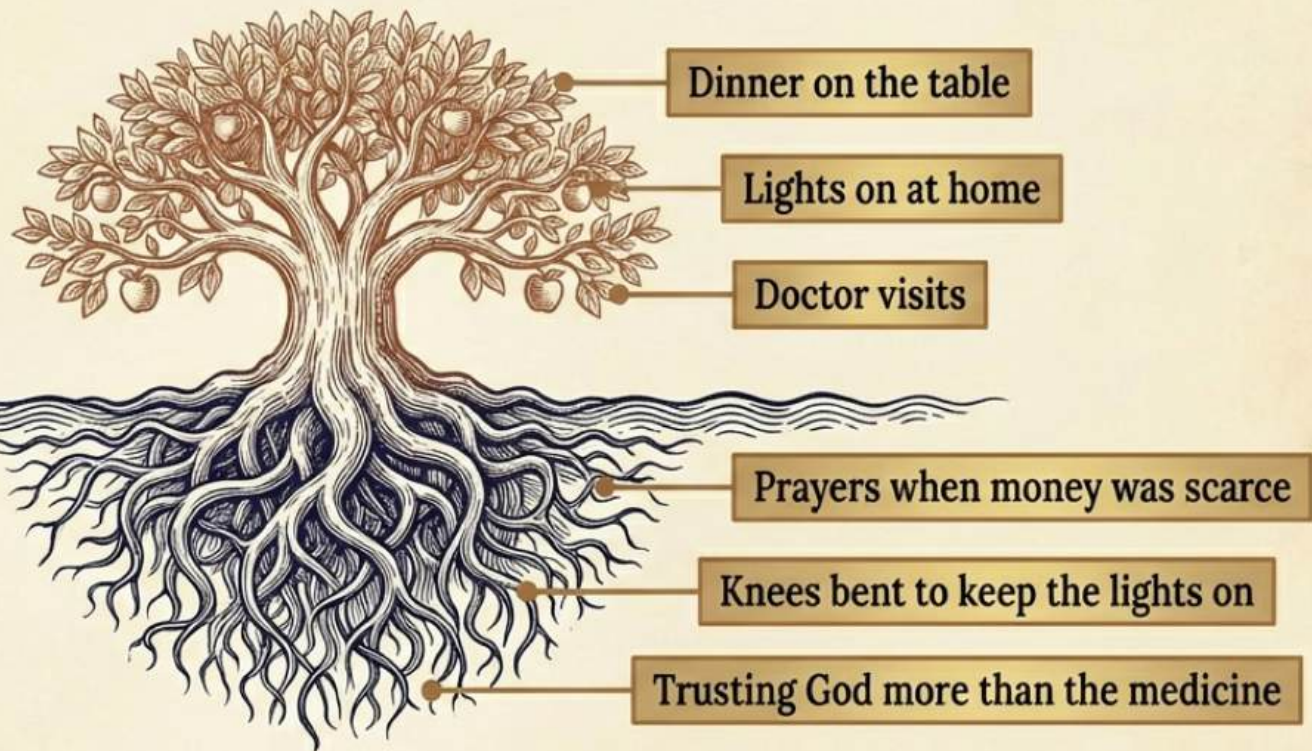
“I’ve been 16. You ain’t never been 40. Which one of us do you think knows the most?” Ask your father and he will show you.



Standing on the Shoulders of Giants

30%
Current Success

70%
The Invisible Work



We rely on Ancient Authority. Current success is built on the prayers of those who turned life's nightmares into dreams.



We Are Not the First to Face This Trial

Historical Resilience as a Cure for Modern Anxiety

❧ *Date* ❧

The Eras of Exclusion



We survived presidents and policies when we couldn't vote.
We survived eras when reading was illegal.

❧ *Date* ❧

The Eras of Dehumanization



We survived times when we were treated as property, yet maintained our humanity.

❧ *Date* ❧

The Eras of Resistance



We survived fire hoses, dogs, and night raids simply for believing in divine equality.

Stop panicking about current leadership. Ask the elders—they have navigated worse storms and are still here.



The Stones of Remembrance



Lane Chapel CME (Est. 1908)

Originally the Colored Methodist Church. A pillar of faith for over a century.



Fox Himbe Cemetery

Purchased by six former slaves to bury their dead with dignity. Oldest grave: Melinda (1845).



Education Hubs

Lewisville, Denton, and Hickory Creek—the only sanctuaries where freed slaves could receive education.

The Legacy

From former slaves to:

- Bobby Mitchell (First Black Mayor, 1993)
- Vernell Craig (School Board Pioneer)

Stony the road we trod, bitter the chastening rod...



Phase II: Careful Protection

The Apple of His Eye

Anatomical Insight: The “Apple” refers to the pupil—the most sensitive, tender part of the body.

Scripture:
Deuteronomy 32:10



Theological Truth: God did not place His people on the outskirts. He placed them in the center of His priority.

When an enemy bothers you, they are essentially poking God in the eye.



A Peculiar Preservation

The Middle Passage

Millions were lost, yet the community remains. Survival was not luck; it was divine keeping.



The Strength of Scraps

Food intended for animals was transformed into sustenance. God wrapped up strength in parts the world intended to throw away.



The Miracle of Education

Second-hand books with missing pages were used by dedicated teachers to produce doctors, lawyers, and accountants.



Reframing trauma not just as endurance,
but as evidence of being kept.



The Eyelid of Heaven

The Threat:
Dust / Enemies
/ Danger



The Reflex:
The Eyelid (God)

The Protected:
The Pupil (You)

The Mechanism:
The eye has a reflex. When a speck approaches, the eyelid shuts automatically—without conscious command.

The Spiritual Application:
Before the weapon can prosper,
the Eyelid of Heaven
closes to cover the pupil.

The Assurance:
“He encircled him.” God is not watching from a distance; He is the protective reflex surrounding His people.

Phase III: Curious Direction

The Stirring of the Nest

Soft Plumes
& Comfort

Thorns, Glass,
& Sharp Objects

The Natural Law:
When it is time to grow,
the mother eagle stirs the
nest, exposing the sharp
objects hidden beneath
the comfort.



The Stirring

The Lesson:
Discomfort is not
abandonment; it is preparation.
If you get too comfortable in
your current status, you will
never achieve your destiny.



To the Mother, It Is a Flight

The Eaglet's View

The Eaglet's
View



The Fall

The Mother's
View

The Flight

Perspective Shift:
To the eaglet, being pushed out looks like a tragedy. To the mother eagle, it is the start of soaring.

Historical Proof:
Dr. King's death looked like a fall, but it spurred a movement.

Personal Application:
Job loss, heartbreak, and sickness are often mistakenly viewed as "falls." In reality, the setback is a setup for a comeback.

Stop Flapping, Start Soaring

The Mature Response to the Storm



Flapping

Fighting in your own strength. The panicked reaction of the immature.



Soaring

Using the thermal currents of the wind. The mature response to the storm.

The Safety Net: Even if the eaglet fails, the mother eagle swoops underneath to catch it before it hits the ground. You are being pushed out, but you will not be allowed to crash.

Chicken Theology vs. Eagle Vision

The Chicken



- Walks looking down.
- Focused on the dirt.
- Consumed by problems on the ground.

The Eagle



- Does not hide from the storm.
- Braces wings **against** the wind.
- Uses the winds meant to destroy it to lift it higher.

Which one are you?

True to Our God, True to Our Native Land

The Benediction Prayer:
God of our weary years,
God of our silent tears,
Thou who has brought us thus far along the way...

- The Final Charge:
- Do not get drunk with the wine of the world.
 - Do not forget where you met God.
 - Stand shadow-like beneath His hand.

Look Back. Be Secure. Soar.

Look Back to Move Forward

Principle 1: Remember Your History

**Consult Your Elders
to Gain Wisdom**



**Consult Your Elders
to Gain Wisdom**

Information is cheap, but wisdom is rare; heritage and history can't be downloaded.

**You Aren't the First
to Face This Trial**

Recalling how ancestors overcame adversity provides strength and perspective for current struggles.



Principle 2: Know You Are Protected

**You Are the
"Apple of His Eye"**



This places you at the very center of God's priority and tenderest protection.



**God Doesn't Watch
from a Distance**

He is *always* present, encircling and journeying with you, not just observing.



Principle 3: Embrace the Challenge

**God Stirs the Nest
to Make You Move**



Discomfort is often divine intervention to push you out of complacency and toward growth.

**Your Setback is a
Setup for a Comeback**



What feels like a fall is often a flight designed to help you achieve your potential.



**Choose to Be an Eagle,
Not a Chicken**

Use the storms of life to soar higher, rather than looking down at your problems.